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Bonn to Free Top Spy in Complex East-West Deal

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BONN, Sept. 28 — In what is reported to be the first step of an elaborate trade of East and West European intelligence agents, West Germany today signed pardon papers for the East German master spy whose association with Chancellor Willy Brandt led to his fall in 1974.

West German President Karl Carstens signed the documents for the release of Guenter Guillaume, according to sources close to the president. But the Bonn government has held up formal announcement of the planned exchange, which had been expected today, for reasons believed connected with one or more of the several other Western countries involved in the deal.

In addition to the 54-year-old Guillaume, at least one other East German spy now in a West German prison as well as East German and Soviet agents currently jailed in France, Denmark and South Africa have been reported part of the swap arrangement.

In return, between 30 and 60 West Germans held in East Germany as political prisoners reportedly will be freed. Moreover, about 30,000 East Germans wishing to join relatives in West Germany are to be given exit visas as part of the deal, according to West German press reports.

Also, in connection with the exchange, West Germany is understood to have agreed to pay a large sum of money to East Germany, which has been the custom in previous swaps.

Guillaume, who has been in poor

health, has served nearly 7½ years of a 13-year prison sentence for treason. He was unmasked in 1974 while serving as a close aide to Brandt, and the exposure led to Brandt's resignation shortly thereafter. It was one of West Germany's most sensational spy scandals.

Until now, the Bonn government had maintained that the "chancellor's spy" would never be pardoned or exchanged as a signal to the communists that espionage at such a high level carried an extreme penalty. At the same time, East Germany has continually asked for the release of its agent.

The West German action comes two months before Chancellor Helmut Schmidt is due to meet with Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev in Bonn and, sometime later, with East German leader Erich Honecker.

Guillaume's wife, Christel, who had been given an eight-year prison sentence in 1975, was released in March. The two communist spies came to West Germany in 1956 in the guise of refugees.

As part of his undercover activities, Guillaume sent a number of highly confidential documents to the communist side during a sensitive period in which West Germany was negotiating critical treaty regulations that would govern newly opened relations between the two German states.

The court that sentenced Guillaume also found that among the secrets he had betrayed to East Berlin was a 1973 letter from then President Richard Nixon to Brandt dealing with rifts in the Atlantic alliance and the military strength of the Warsaw Pact.